MARVEL

015

SOULE
CAMUNCOLI
ORLANDINI
CURIEL

STAR WARS™ DARTH VADER

BURNING SEAS

Part III

Some time has passed since the ascension of Emperor Palpatine, the formation of his great Galactic Empire, and the descent of former Jedi Knight Anakin Skywalker into his new form as twisted half-man, half-machine Darth Vader – Sith apprentice to Palpatine.

Due to the efforts of Vader and his Inquisitors, few Jedi remain to oppose Palpatine. Yet, a new threat has arisen against the regime. King Lee-Char of the ocean planet of Mon Cala resists Imperial control. Palpatine has sent Vader to quell this rebellion and destroy the Jedi in Lee-Char's service.

But the Mon Calamari will not go down without a fight. The king has unveiled a secret weapon and unleashed massive sea creatures against the Imperial troops. All were lost to the sea – including Vader....

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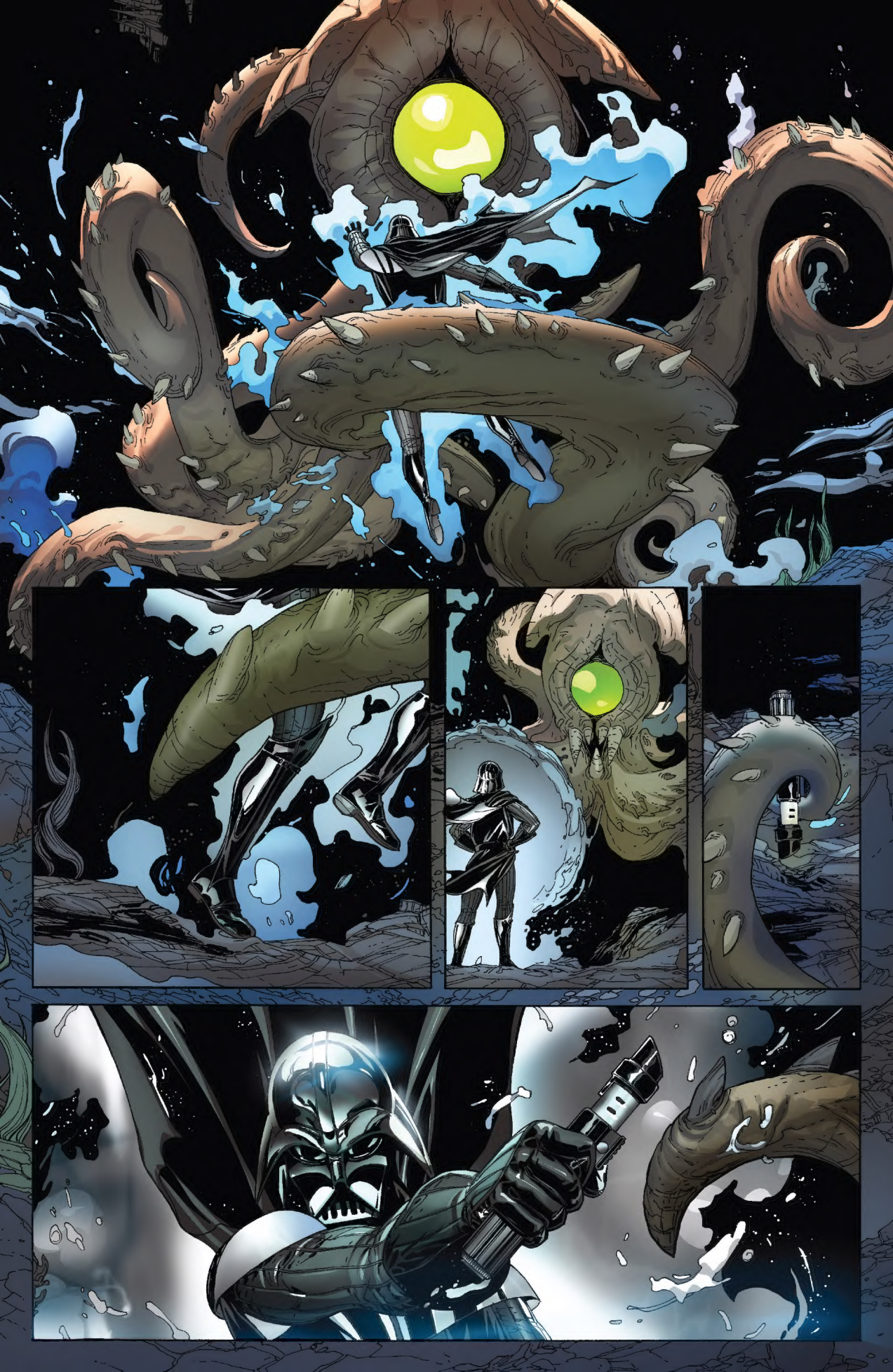
Mon Cala.
The Great Ungeness Trench.

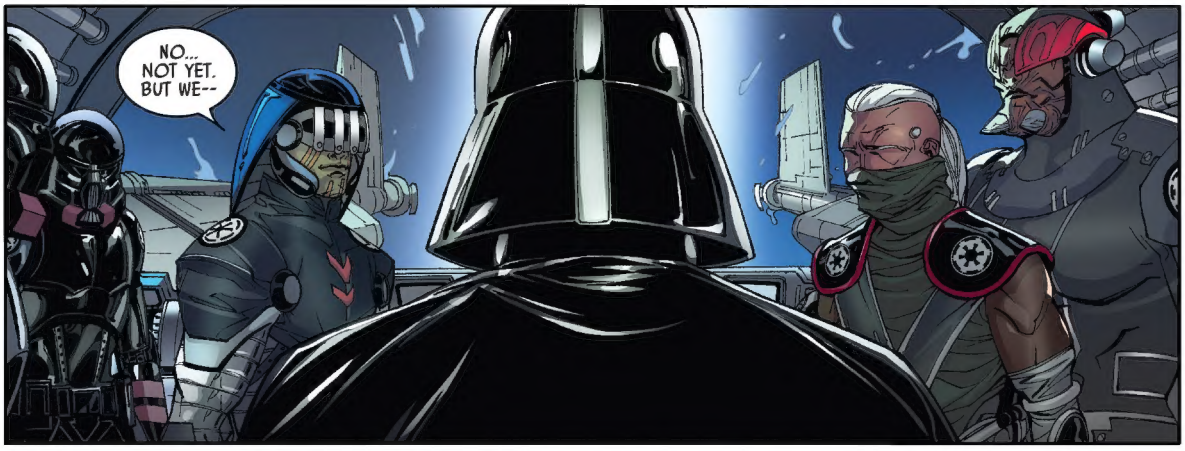
ALERT. OXYGEN RESERVES AT 30 PERCENT.
ALERT. EXTERNAL PRESSURE HAS EXCEEDED MAXIMUM SUIT TOLERANCE.
ALERT. SUIT RUPTURE IMMINENT.
RELOCATE TO SAFE ENVIRONMENT IMMEDIATELY.
EXTERNAL PRESSURE RETURNED TO NORMAL TOLERANCES.

NNNGH!



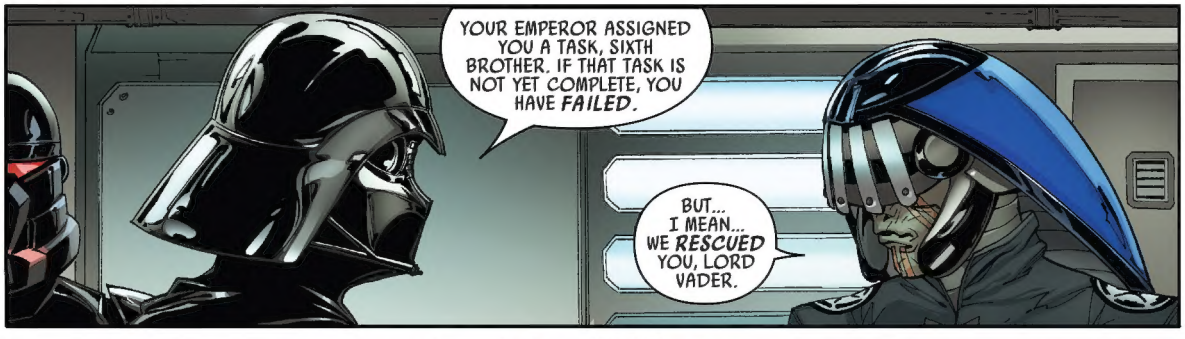
=KZZT= IN =KXXXK= CAN YOU =DDDZZZK=
REPEAT. THIS IS =KZZZK= INQUISI=ZZZT= SENDING OUT CODE =SSSKT=
VADER, DO YOU READ? REPEAT. VADER, IF YOU'RE OUT THERE--
I AM. COME TO MY SIGNAL.

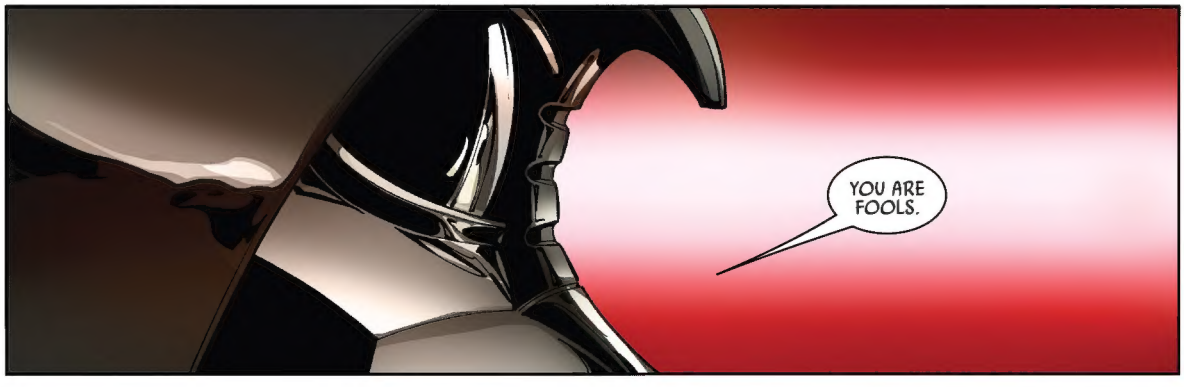
LORD VADER. YOU SURVIVED.
WE THOUGHT--
TELL ME.
THE JEDI IS DEAD?


NO... NOT YET. BUT WE--

THE KING, THEN. IS LEE-CHAR DEAD?
WE...DON'T KNOW.
THE KING WAS SWEPT AWAY WHEN THE TIDAL WAVE HIT.

BUT IT'S NOT ALL BAD. I GOT LEE-CHAR TO GIVE ME THE JEDI'S LOCATION.
WE KNOW EXACTLY WHERE TO GO.
WE BARELY SURVIVED THE WAVE OURSELVES--LOST TWO CLONES.
ONCE WE PULLED OURSELVES TOGETHER, WE REQUISITIONED THIS SUB AND CAME LOOKING FOR YOU.
WHY?


YOUR EMPEROR ASSIGNED YOU A TASK, SIXTH BROTHER. IF THAT TASK IS NOT YET COMPLETE, YOU HAVE FAILED.
BUT... I MEAN... WE RESCUED YOU, LORD VADER.


YOU ARE FOOLS.

I NEVER NEED...
...RESCUE.

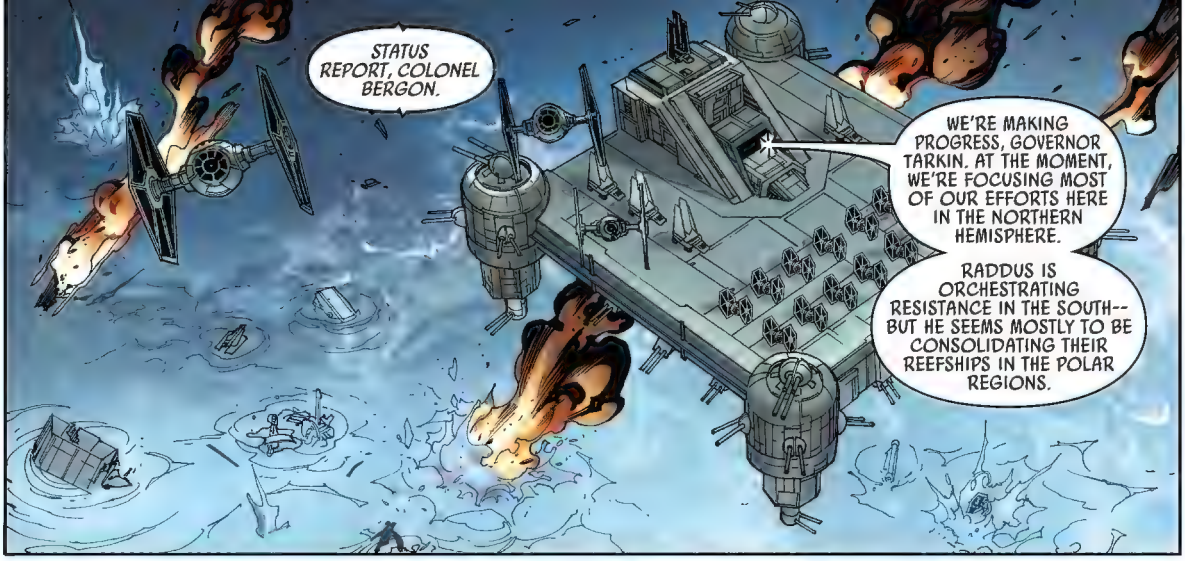
YOUR MISSION ON MON CALA IS TO FIND AND KILL THE JEDI ADVISING KING LEE-CHAR. NOTHING ELSE.
BUT LIKE I SAID, LORD VADER, WE KNOW WHERE HE IS. WE CAN GO THERE NOW.

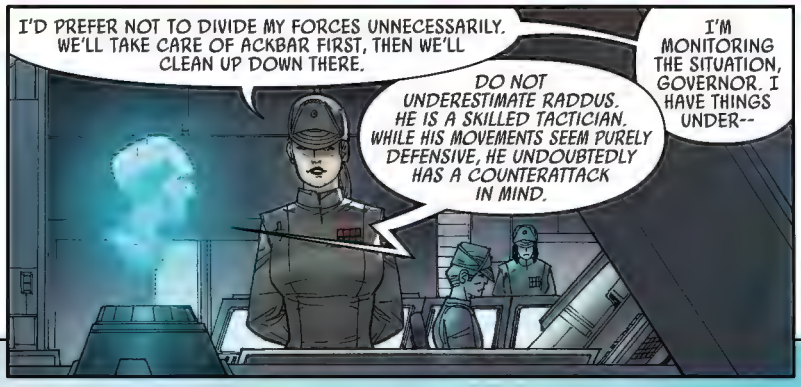
AND IF LEE-CHAR DID NOT DIE WHEN THE WAVE HIT, NINTH SISTER...
...WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE HIS FIRST ACTION, KNOWING THAT HE HAS GIVEN THE LOCATION OF HIS CRUCIAL JEDI ALLY TO A SQUAD OF IMPERIAL ASSASSINS?

HE'LL...
...WARN HIM?

WE NEED TO MOVE. NOW.
AND ALL OF YOU...

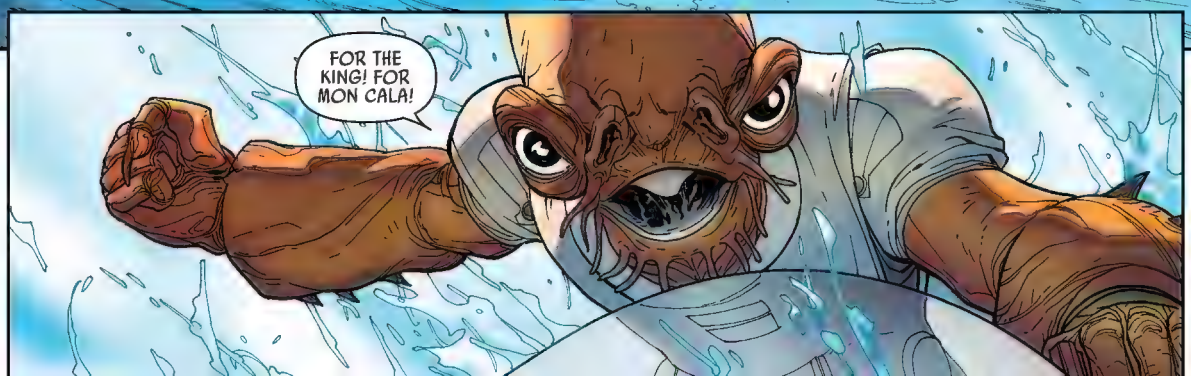
"...PRAY THE KING IS DEAD."
BY THE TIDES...THAT'S THE *KING*.
IS HE ALIVE?
WE CAN ONLY PRAY.


STATUS REPORT, COLONEL BERGON.
WE'RE MAKING PROGRESS, GOVERNOR TARKIN. AT THE MOMENT, WE'RE FOCUSING MOST OF OUR EFFORTS HERE IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE.
RADDUS IS ORCHESTRATING RESISTANCE IN THE SOUTH-- BUT HE SEEMS MOSTLY TO BE CONSOLIDATING THEIR REEFSHIPS IN THE POLAR REGIONS.

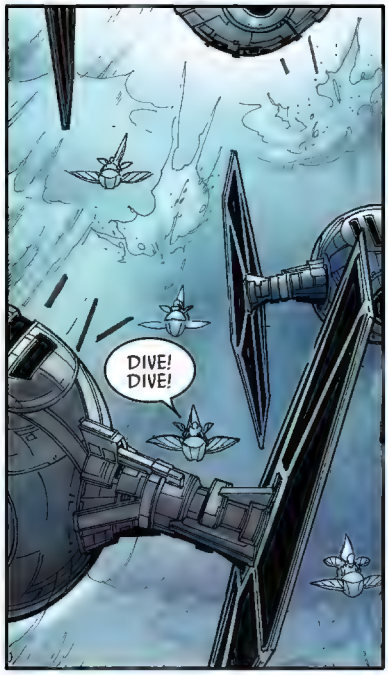

I'D PREFER NOT TO DIVIDE MY FORCES UNNECESSARILY. WE'LL TAKE CARE OF ACKBAR FIRST, THEN WE'LL CLEAN UP DOWN THERE.
DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE RADDUS. HE IS A SKILLED TACTICIAN. WHILE HIS MOVEMENTS SEEM PURELY DEFENSIVE, HE UNDOUBTEDLY HAS A COUNTERATTACK IN MIND.
I'M MONITORING THE SITUATION, GOVERNOR. I HAVE THINGS UNDER--

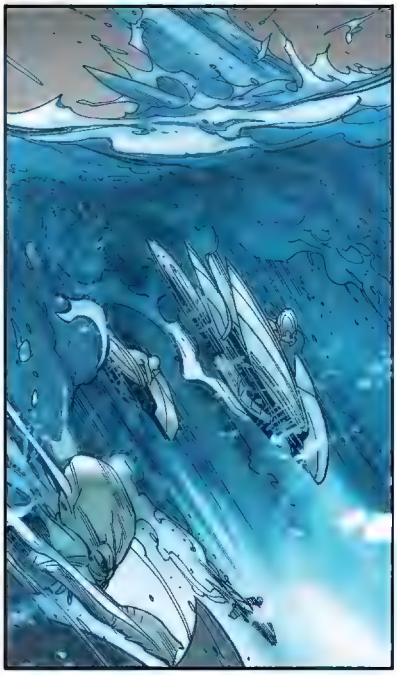
COLONEL-- WE HAVE INCOMING!

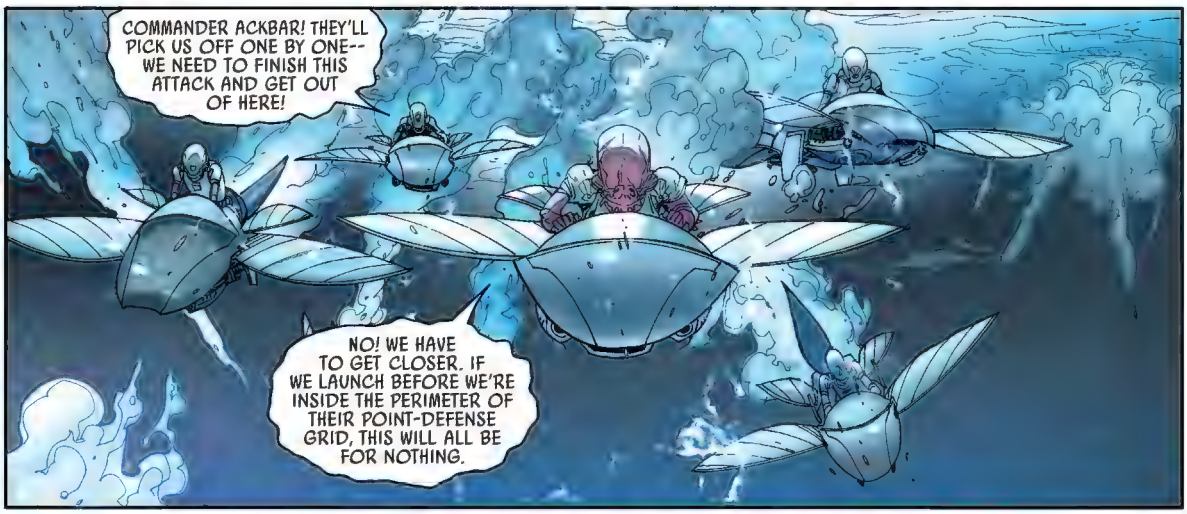
FORM UP ON ME!

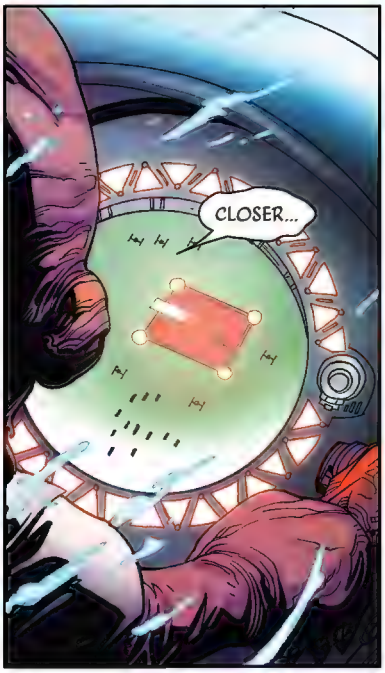

FOR THE KING! FOR MON CALA!

SENSORS HAVE IDENTIFIED COMMANDER ACKBAR AS LEADING THE ATTACK SQUAD.
THAT IDIOT IS ACTUALLY ENTERING BATTLE *HIMSELF?* WHAT DOES HE THINK HE'LL PROVE?
SCRAMBLE THE TIES. THEY WON'T GET ANYWHERE NEAR US.


DIVE! DIVE!




COMMANDER ACKBAR! THEY'LL PICK US OFF ONE BY ONE-- WE NEED TO FINISH THIS ATTACK AND GET OUT OF HERE!
NO! WE HAVE TO GET CLOSER. IF WE LAUNCH BEFORE WE'RE INSIDE THE PERIMETER OF THEIR POINT-DEFENSE GRID, THIS WILL ALL BE FOR NOTHING.


CLOSER...

CLOSER...

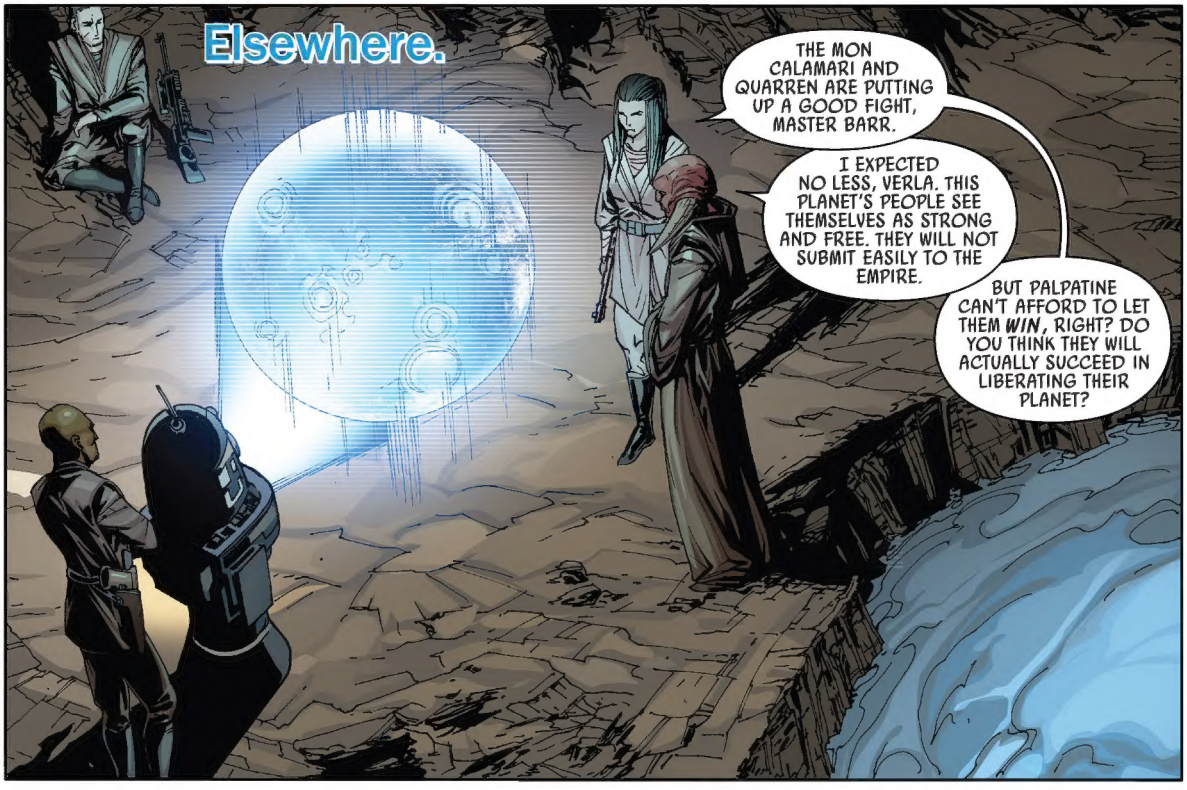
NOW!

SSSHHH!
PFFFSH!
KRCK!
KRCK!

THEIR MISSILES HAVE PENETRATED OUR SHIELDS! SHOOT THEM DOWN!
THERE'S TOO MANY FOR OUR TARGETING SYSTEMS TO HANDLE!
NO.
THOOM!
THOOM!
THOOM!

HNH.
COMMANDER ACKBAR-- I'M GETTING A TRANSMISSION FROM ONE OF THE QUARREN PATROL TEAMS.
ALL RIGHT, SERGEANT... WHAT IS IT?
THEY... THEY SAY THEY'VE FOUND THE KING.

MY KING-- I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE SAFE. WE THOUGHT...
HONESTLY, ACKBAR, SO... SO DID I.
HOW GOES... HOW GOES THE FIGHT?
THE EMPIRE DEPLOYED SKYBASES TO USE AS STAGING GROUNDS FOR THEIR ASSAULT.
WE WERE ABLE TO TAKE ONE DOWN, BUT THEY HAVE MORE, AND CAN BRING IN AS MANY AS THEY NEED.
THEY MAY NOT WISH TO EXPEND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES HERE, HOWEVER. I BELIEVE NOW IS AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT TO CALL FOR A TRUCE AND RE-OPEN NEGOTIATIONS.
NO. NO TRUCE. THE EMPIRE MADE ITS CHOICE.
WE WILL FIGHT UNTIL THEY WITHDRAW. IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME. I WILL SAVE MY PEOPLE. I WILL SAVE THE GALAXY.
THE...THE GALAXY?
YOUR MAJESTY, I SAY THIS WITH THE UTMOST RESPECT...BUT IS THAT YOUR OPINION, OR THAT OF YOUR JEDI?
MINE, OF COURSE. THE JEDI IS MERELY...
THE JEDI. OH...OH, NO.
GET ME OUT OF THIS THING.
I NEED A COMM... NOW.


Elsewhere.
THE MON CALAMARI AND QUARREN ARE PUTTING UP A GOOD FIGHT, MASTER BARR.
I EXPECTED NO LESS, VERLA. THIS PLANET'S PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES AS STRONG AND FREE. THEY WILL NOT SUBMIT EASILY TO THE EMPIRE.
BUT PALPATINE CAN'T AFFORD TO LET THEM WIN, RIGHT? DO YOU THINK THEY WILL ACTUALLY SUCCEED IN LIBERATING THEIR PLANET?

EITHER WAY.

BLEET BLEEP WHIRRR
AH. THE KING SURVIVES. GOOD. PUT HIM THROUGH, ENDEE.

MASTER JEDI. PLEASE, LISTEN TO ME. WE HAVE LITTLE TIME.
EVEN IF SO, THEY HAVE NO IDEA WHERE TO FIND ME.
I TRIGGERED A SCOURING OF THE SURFACE, AS WE DISCUSSED. BUT THE IMPERIAL ASSASSINS SENT TO FIND YOU...THEY MAY HAVE SURVIVED.
BUT...THAT'S JUST IT. THEY DO KNOW. THEY TORTURED ME, AND...I TOLD THEM WHERE YOU ARE.

THEY'RE PROBABLY COMING FOR YOU RIGHT NOW.

COLONEL BERGON'S SKYBASE IS LOST, GOVERNOR TARKIN.
HOW?
WE'RE STILL ANALYZING THE DATA, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THE MON CALAMARI USED A SWARM ATTACK, WITH METAL-CASED MISSILES AS OPPOSED TO ENERGY PROJECTILES.
YES. CLEVER. BETTER ODDS OF PENETRATING THE SKYBASE'S SHIELDS.
YET ANOTHER PIECE OF MILITARY TECH OUR COLLEAGUES IN THE IMPERIAL SECURITY BUREAU SHOULD HAVE ALERTED US TO, WOULDN'T YOU SAY, COMMANDER JORDO?
GOVERNOR TARKIN, WE HAVE BEEN IN THIS SYSTEM FOR MERE DAYS.
YOU CAN'T EXPECT ME TO GIVE YOU A COMPLETE PICTURE OF THE PLANET IN SO LITTLE TIME!
YES. I AM REALIZING I CAN EXPECT VERY LITTLE FROM YOU.
REQUISITION A SET OF STORMTROOPER ARMOR FOR COMMANDER JORDO AND SEND HIM TO THE SURFACE.
PERHAPS HE WILL FIND A WAY TO MAKE HIMSELF USEFUL.
NO! TARKIN... I SWEAR TO YOU, I'LL--
WHAT NOW, GOVERNOR? RETALIATION?
I THINK NOT, LIEUTENANT. I AM LEANING TOWARD...

"...ESCALATION."
To be continued!

DARTH VADER
NEXT ISSUE: